

U.S. Embassy Santiago Newsletter

Information for American Citizens in Chile

Volume 1 Issue 1

January-March 2006



GREETINGS FROM **AMBASSADOR CRAIG KELLY**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of the U.S. Embassy Santiago Newsletter! This newsletter is designed to provide the American community in Chile with information about Embassy consular services, programs and guidance. Chile is a beautiful country and a good friend of the United States. I hope this newsletter contributes to making your stay here as safe and pleasant as possible. Whether you are a short-term visitor or a long-time resident, I wish you and your family the very best for 2006.



EMBASSY NEWS

Warden Meeting Held Dec. 3, 2005

The Embassy held its annual Warden Meeting on Saturday Dec. 3rd with about 40 American Citizen wardens in attendance. Ambassador Kelly spoke about U.S.-Chilean relations. There were also presentations from Embassy officials on the security situation in Chile and on the risks of Avian Flu. A more detailed summary of the meeting can be found on the embassy website: www.usembassy.cl under the American Citizens Services tab.

Disaster Preparedness Webpage

The Embassy has launched a new webpage offering practical tips to American Citizens on how to prepare themselves and their homes for natural disasters. As we all know, Chile is not immune from earthquakes and being prepared can make the difference immune from earthquakes and other life-threatening natural disasters. Good information can make the difference between being a survivor and a statistic. The new disaster preparedness webpage also includes links to Chilean government information on this same topic. The webpage can be

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Walk-in Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30-11:30am, closed U.S. & Chilean Holidays

THE ACS UNIT WILL BE CLOSED FEBRUARY 10 FOR TRAINING

accessed through the embassy webpage at www.usembassy.cl and then clicking on the "Disaster Preparedness" tab on the right hand side of the page.

Consular Outreach

If you are an American living in northern Chile we may be able to save you a trip to Santiago to renew a passport or get a document notarized because we plan to come to you. We plan to send a consul to Iquique and another city in the north to offer services to American Citizens in that region in during March. The Embassy will send details about the date and place we will be offering services to all Americans registered that have listed an address in the areas to be visited.

Need help with your taxes? IRS coming to Santiago

A representative of the Internal Revenue Service will be working out of the Embassy on March 22nd and 23rd and will be available to help American Citizens who have tax questions or problems. A few weeks before the visit we will send a notice advising how to sign up to see the IRS representative. Remember the filing deadline for your 2005 taxes is April 15, 2006.



Expedited Visa Appointments for spouses and minor children of Americans!

Effective February 1, spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens residing in Chile may obtain expedited non-immigrant visa interviews. To qualify, applicants must present the U.S. passport of the parent or spouse and either the marriage certificate or birth certificate as appropriate to Chilexpress or another of the Embassy's visa appointment handling agents. Please note this is an extra service to American Citizens resident in Chile and does not change U.S. immigration law requiring children of Americans who qualify for citizenship to enter the U.S. with a U.S. passport. Also, spouses and children of Americans who intend to immigrate to or reside in the U.S. must still obtain an immigrant visa (not a tourist visa). Further information about visa requirements is available on the Embassy website.

Foreign Service Written Exam on April 8th

Have you ever thought that you might like to work in a U.S. Embassy abroad? One way to do so is become a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State. The first step is taking the Foreign Service Written Exam. The exam will be offered at the Embassy on Saturday, April 8, 2006. You must register for the exam by March 1, 2006. For more information or to register for the exam, go to www.careers.state.gov.

Avian Flu Update

The Embassy sent out Warden Message 2005-3, the Avian Flu Fact Sheet, on November 23rd outlining the information that all Americans residing overseas should know about Avian Flu. The Fact Sheet notes that there is no provision for the U.S. government to provide American citizens traveling or living abroad with medication, including in the event of a pandemic, and encourages American citizens interested in obtaining medication to consult their physician. The full message is archived on the Embassy website.

The Chilean Government has a preparedness plan for preventing avian flu from becoming pandemic. This document (in Spanish) can be found at:

<http://www.minsal.gov.cl/ici/pandemiainfluenza>

This plan is extensive. The Chilean Government has identified key public health alert phases: preparatory, pandemic alert, pandemic, and post-pandemic. There are a series of actions outlined to be taken at each phase. The plan emphasizes open communication both domestically and internationally.

The MOH has announced it will continue its annual flu vaccine program in 2005. The MOH plans to purchase the H5N1 vaccine when it becomes available.



The Chilean Government plans to contain the spread of the disease by restricting international points of entry should AI affect humans on a large scale. Internal controls would include the cancellation of classes, a restriction on large public events, and a restriction on non-essential work functions.

On January 19, the U.S. Embassy and the Pan-American Health Organization organized a seminar in Santiago on “Avian Flu Awareness and Preparation”. The seminar included presentations by Chile’s Minister of Health, a representative of the World Health Organization and a specialist from the U.S. Center for Disease Control.

Direct Deposit for your Social Security benefits

Did you know that more than 80% of the more than 1,200 federal benefits recipients in Chile have signed up for Direct Deposit? With Direct Deposit payments are electronically transferred to your bank account in Chile. It is the most convenient, safest and fastest form of payment because your checks do not have to be physically transferred from the U.S. to Chile by postal authorities. If you would like more information about Direct Deposit, please see our website or

call us at 330-3021. If the call is connected to a voice mailbox, please leave a short message and we will return the call at the earliest possible opportunity.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The American Association of Chile: a non-profit, non-political organization serving and uniting the citizens of the United States and their families, and striving to build strong bridges between our members and the Chilean community (description from AAC's website). www.aachile.org

The American Chamber of Commerce Chile (AMCHAM Chile) To promote free trade and investment between Chile and the United States and to be an effective voice for the membership while facilitating related services (description from AMCHAM's website). www.amchamchile.cl



Little League Chile Do you know a child who would like to play baseball? Would you like to get involved with youth baseball? If so, please contact Mr. Jorge Varela at 228-9768.

English Language Religious Services in Santiago Details are available on the Embassy website at http://www.usembassy.cl/_temporal/535/Consular%20Files/Old%20Consular%20web%20site/ReligiousServices.htm. (schedules may change during February due to vacations. Please call to confirm.)

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS?

Please send them to
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